

## Message Text

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PAGE 01     PRETOR 04669 111730Z  
ACTION NODS-00

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FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2080  
INFO AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 4669

EXDIS HANDLE AS NODIS  
FROM LOW

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PDEV, PGOV, RH  
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: POSSIBLE SNAG ON LOCATION FOR ALL  
PARTIES MEETING

1. GRAHAM AND I LUNCED WITH ELIOT GABELLAH THURSDAY  
(AUGUST 10). GABELLAH SAID HE THOUGHT WE HAD MADE MANY  
CONVERTS AND IT LOOKED AS THOUGH WE WOULD GET OUR  
CONFERENCE. HE WAS OBVIOUSLY WORRIED THAT THE PATRIOTIC  
FRONT LEADERS MIGHT BE UNREASONABLE IN THEIR DEMANDS AND  
WE EXPLAINED TO HIM THAT IF THE SALISBURY GROUP WAS  
PREPARED TO MOVE SUBSTANTIALLY OFF OF THE MARCH 3 AGREEMENT,  
IN TERMS OF ABANDONING THE 1969 CONSTITUTION AND MODIFYING  
SOME OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE INDEPENDENCE CONSTITUTION  
THAT WAS DEVELOPING, AND THE FRONT LINE PRESIDENTS COULD  
BE CONVINCED THAT A NEW AGREEMENT WAS TRULY IRREVERSIBLE  
AND A SERIOUS ONE, IN THAT CASE, WE BELIEVE THEY MIGHT BE  
WILLING TO PRESS THE PATRIOTIC FRONT TO TAKE A REASONABLE  
POSITION ON SHARING POWER.

2. TOWARDS THE END OF THE CONVERSATION, GABELLAH  
RAISED THE PROBLEM OF WHERE THE CONFERENCE WOULD BE  
HELD. HE ASKED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF SALISBURY  
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AND WE SAID IT WAS OUT OF THE QUESTION. HE THEN  
EXPRESSED THE PROBLEM WHICH HE SAID ALL THE INTERNAL  
NATIONALISTS HAVE ABOUT GOING TO ZAMBIA. KAUNDA HAS  
BEEN THE BITTEREST ENEMY OF THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT.  
THEY ALL FEEL THAT HE IS THE MOST UNFRIENDLY OF ALL THE  
FRONT LINE PRESIDENTS. BESIDES, GABELLAH SAID, NKOMO  
WAS REPUTED TO HAVE 10,000 TROOPS IN THE AREA. HOW

COULD THEY TRUST THE SECURITY OF THE SITE?

3. WE ARGUED VERY FIRMLY IN FAVOR OF ZAMBIA, MAKING THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

--THERE IS SOMETHING WRONG WITH EVERY SITE. WE HAVE EXAMINED THIS VERY CAREFULLY AND TRIED ALL OF THEM. THIS IS THE ONE WITH THE LEAST OBJECTIONS.

--IF SECRETARYS OWEN AND VANCE ARE THERE, THEY CAN BE CERTAIN THAT THEIR SECURITY WILL BE PROTECTED. BESIDES, THERE ARE NO ZAPU TROOPS ANYWHERE IN THE AREA CLOSE BY.

--MUGABE HIMSELF WAS RELUCTANT TO GO TO ZAMBIA BUT AGREED AS A GESTURE OF ACCOMMODATION, THE KIND OF GESTURE, WE BELIEVE, EVERYONE MUST MAKE.

--IT IS PHYSICALLY THE MOST CONVENIENT FOR ALL PARTIES CONCERNED. IT IS THE CLOSEST. THE FACILITIES ARE ENTIRELY PRIVATE AND THERE IS AN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT NEARBY.

--WE HAD TRIED OTHER LOCATIONS BEFORE, BUT EVEN THE RHODESIAN AUTHORITIES (GAYLARD) RULED THEM OUT AS BEING INAPPROPRIATE FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF TRANSPORTATION AND SECURITY.

--KAUNDA WOULD NOT BE PRESENT AT THE MEETING NOR WOULD ANY OTHER ZAMBIAN OR FRONT LINE REPRESENTATIVE.

--PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANT WE WANT FRONT LINE LEADERS NEARBY SO THAT THEY CAN PLAY THE KIND OF A ROLE THEY  
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DID IN LUANDA TO PRESS THE PATRIOTIC FRONT TO TAKE REASONABLE AND RESPONSIBLE POSITIONS.

4. GABELLAH REMAINED UNCONVINCED THOUGH HE ACKNOWLEDGED OUR ARGUMENTS. GRAHAM THEN ASKED WHETHER A LETTER FROM PRESIDENT KAUNDA TO EACH OF THE AFRICAN PARTICIPANTS, INVITING THEM TO USE THE FACILITY, ASSURING THEIR SAFETY AND PRIVACY, WOULD HELP. GABELLAH SAID HE THOUGHT IT WOULD VERY MUCH.

5. COMMENT: I BELIEVE GABELLAH WAS REFLECTING THE VIEWS OF BOTH MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE AND THAT THOUGH HE ACKNOWLEDGED THE FORCE OF OUR POSITION, HE WAS TELLING US THAT HE DOUBTED THAT THE LEADERS WOULD ACCEPT THEM. WE EXPECT THAT WE WILL HEAR SHORTLY FROM GAYLARD TO THIS EFFECT. IN THE MEANTIME, GRAHAM IS SUGGESTING TO LONDON THAT THEY APPROACH KAUNDA WITH THE SUGGESTION OF THE MESSAGES. WHETHER INTERNAL NATIONALIST CONCERN IS GENUINE OR MERELY A DELAYING TACTIC, THE PROBLEM IS NOT LIKELY TO GO AWAY EASILY.  
EDMONDSON

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